

Year 2000 Date Field Compliance and Certification Policy

Adopted by the Information Services Board (ISB) on July 31, 1996.

Amended: November 24, 1998

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Purpose

The Year 2000 date change problem poses one of the most significant challenges ever faced by the Information Technology (IT) industry. The Year 2000 problem is rooted in a decades old practice in the IT industry to minimize expensive data storage and data entry time in computer programs by storing the year as two digits (96) instead of four (1996). This becomes a problem when computer systems interpret "00" as "1900" rather than "2000." The problem causes software performing arithmetic operations, comparisons, or sorting on date field to fail or yield incorrect results when working with years beyond 1999.

Many systems will feel the impact of the date change well before 2000. For example, many software applications automatically enter dates beyond 1999 in calculating projections long before the date actually arrives.

A coordinated approach to the Year 2000 problem requires Washington State agencies to perform date field triage, placing the first priority on fixing the problem on mission critical computing systems. Agencies have been instructed to address Year 2000 date conversion activities in their 1996 Strategic IT Plans. The Attorney General's Office has advised the Year 2000 Special Interest Group that, in order to minimize liability, agencies must make a good faith effort to find Year 2000 date field solutions that materially work. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) has instructed agencies to make Year 2000 compliance the first priority in preparing their information technology budgets.

The Information Services Board (ISB), responsible for instituting statewide technical policies, standards, and procedures, is establishing this policy and reporting requirement to ensure Year 2000 compliance and certification.

It is the intent of the Information Services Board that no interruption in critical Washington state agency services occur as a result of the millennium date change. State agencies will:

- Analyze all critical computer systems to determine the extent of the century date change problem,
- Plan and implement suitable measures to correct any date change problems prior to the time when the impacts of the problem are experienced,
- Guarantee the integrity of systems affected by date change problems by conducting appropriate compliance tests and certification, and
- Certify to the Board that their mission critical computing systems are Year 2000 date field compliant.

This policy, and the requisite reporting process, is an addendum to agency IT planning mandated in RCW 43.105.170.

Statutory Authority

The provisions of RCW 43.105.041 detail the powers and duties of the ISB, including the authority to develop statewide or interagency information services and technical policies, standards and procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all executive and judicial branch agencies and educational institutions, as provided by law, that operate, manage, or use IT services or equipment to support critical state business functions.

The scope includes, but is not limited to:

- Agencies that operate, manage, or use stand-alone, shared, or network-attached computers, whether mainframes, mid-range, or desktop PCs (microcomputers) for their own use or for use by other agencies.
- Agencies that operate, manage, or use voice, data, video telecommunications, or process control equipment, networks, or services for their own use or for use by other agencies.
- Agencies that exchange date-related information with other state agencies, local, federal, or private-sector entities.

Exemptions

None.

Policy

Agencies shall use standards-based solutions to the Year 2000 date field problem for the purposes of data exchange.

The Washington State standard is based on the existing International Organization for Standardization standard for data elements and interchange formats for dates and times. The standard format for data exchange is:

- CCYYMMDD where
 - CC = century
 - YY = year
 - MM = month
 - DD = date

The standards-based date field solutions in this policy apply only to data exchange, providing agencies with maximum flexibility to use other solutions on proprietary or in-house applications.

Agencies shall analyze all computer systems for date change impact.

Agencies shall analyze all computer systems to determine the scope and impact of the Year 2000 date change. The analysis shall include sufficient detail to develop cost, resource, and time estimates for each impacted system. The analysis shall also identify all internal and external system interfaces to other computer systems.

Agencies shall prioritize Year 2000 activities to ensure that systems with the highest impact on services to citizens receive highest preference.

Some agencies will not be able to convert all affected systems before the impact of the Year 2000 date change. Several factors may impact the sequence in which systems are converted, however, agencies should prioritize conversion activities to include mission-critical systems first.

Agencies shall develop and implement standards-based conversion plans for all significant date-change impacted computer systems.

Agencies are in the best position to select the appropriate conversion options for their systems.

Agencies shall plan for and test all converted systems.

Testing for Year 2000 compliance should be conducted at all levels.

Agencies shall certify the compliance of mission critical date-change impacted computer systems.

Agencies shall certify to the Board that their mission critical systems are Year 2000 compliant. That is, the systems will function without error or interruption related to date field data, specifically including errors or interruption from functions which may involve date data from more than one century.

Year 2000 compliance includes date data century recognition, calculations that accommodate same century and multi-century formulas and calculations, and date data interface values that reflect the century.

Further, the ISB requires that agencies include contract language in all future software acquisitions that protects the state from unnecessary business interruption. The vendor should warrant that the software includes, at no additional cost to the agency, design and performance such that the agency will not experience date-related interruptions to its business functions prior to, during or after the calendar year 2000.

Certification Effective Date

State agencies will certify to the Information Services Board (ISB) that their mission critical computing systems are Year 2000 date field compliant.

Agencies are in the best position to know the earliest date at which their computer systems will be effected by date-change problems. Agencies must make their mission critical Year 2000 compliant prior to the earliest impact date on their respective systems.

The reporting process will take place in two phases:

Phase 1: Agencies will provide certification for Year 2000 compliant systems with their 1997 Tactical Plans. The 1997 plan should also include a detailed schedule for making any remaining systems Year 2000 compliant.

Phase 2: All remaining certificates of Year 2000 compliance will be due with agencies' 1999 Tactical Plans.

Certification to the Board will be in the form of a letter from agency directors, once they have been satisfied that their respective systems have been successfully converted and tested for Year 2000 compliance. Specific certification methodology shall be determined by the individual agencies.

Maintenance

Technological advances and changes in the business requirements of agencies will necessitate periodic revisions to policies, standards, and guidelines. The Department of Information Services is responsible for routine maintenance of these to keep them current. Major policy changes will require the approval of the ISB.

Appendix: Date Field Standard Policy Clarification Statement

Adopted by the Information Services Board (ISB) on November 24, 1998.

1. It is the intent of the Information Services Board (ISB) that Washington state agencies adopt the standard for date data exchange identified in its "Year 2000 Date Field Compliance and Certification Policy" as a long-term strategy. This allows agencies to migrate their systems over time and in an orderly fashion toward preferred method of date data exchange, while allowing appropriate flexibility in achieving this goal in the short term.
2. The ISB expects that agencies will revise their applications and systems to support the standards-based date data format in a timely manner as dictated by prudent business judgement. Implementation of the standards-based date format will be considered prudent and timely according to the following conditions:
 - When any data exchange partner requests this new expanded date format;
 - When acquiring and or building replacement application system, agencies must specify design criteria for capturing and/or utilizing this expanded date format, or document valid, specific business exceptions;
 - When it is more cost effective to upgrade long life (legacy) "mission critical" application systems to capture and/or utilize the new date format, rather than apply multiple shorter term solutions; and
3. The revision of applications and systems to support the four-digit date field becomes part of the agency portfolio management system and shall be reported to DIS and the ISB on that basis.